

BATTLES WITH MINIATURES

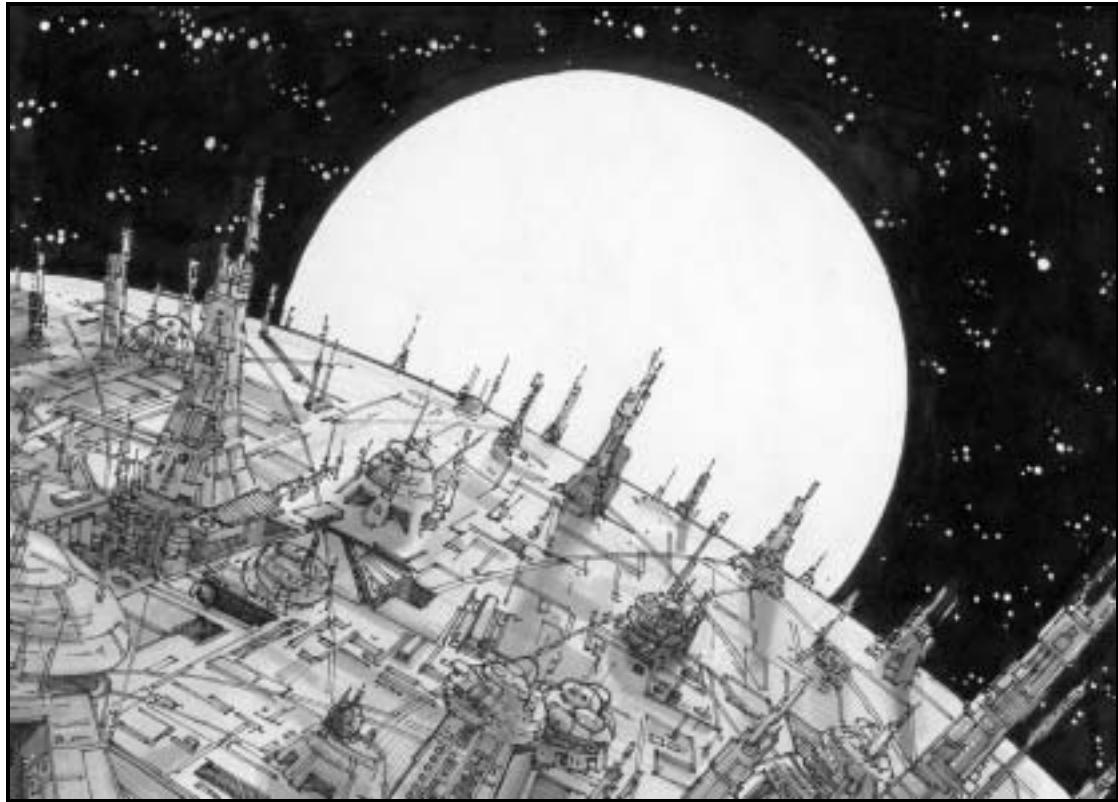
Issue 8 2001



VOID

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Vacillus

Vacillus is the heart of the immense, quasi-governmental operation that is VASA. It is the original gate world, located about three astronomical units from the Leviathan grav-well. Settlements in and around Vacillus consist of the harbour moon, Kothon, and Himera, the continuous city.

Himera

Himera was once a small, permanent settlement of Viridian Assembly scientists, but after VASA became neutral with respect to the settlements that were to become the Tripartite Powers, the Himerans started to branch out, using their pod technologies to settle other parts of Vacillus. There was a time when Vacillus had many cities on its surface, but pod layers have crept outwards from these settlements and the transport links between them. Himera eventually absorbed most of the other communities and nowadays they are mere districts of the capital. Himera has spread as far as it can now, covering all of the Northern and a good part of the Southern Hemispheres of Vacillus. The shifting Southern Ice Wastes have halted Himera's march. This is a vast region of unstable ice floes that has proven too hazardous to build permanent settlements on. Himera has four far smaller satellite cities around the fringes of the Southern Ice

Wastes, built on rocky islands in the ice. These are Heiji, Nozaki, The City of Spas, and The Island of the Fifth Essence. They are linked to the main conurbation by deep ice canyons along which sleds and grav-skimmers flit.

Himera is a settlement of paramount importance in so many ways. Its main purpose is to act as a great customs and excise zone, processing all traffic through the Leviathan grav-well. Himera is copiously supplied with launch pads and landing sites, each of which is staffed by customs officials and heavily armed security forces. Every single ship on its way to the grav-well, or coming back through it bound for the Homeworlds is expected to stop at the Kothon Harbour for a thorough examination of its contents. Crews take a shuttle down to Himera to have their documentation processed, possibly face interrogation, and take in the commercial delights of the continuous city while they wait

for their vessels to pass inspection. The shuttle ports are equipped with so-called 'coffins' for these travellers—racks of credit chip accessed sleeping pods, each one being 1x2x1 metres in dimension and containing a slim mattress, lighting and a media unit. Companies moving produce through the grav-well have to pay hefty taxes on goods, providing VASA with a rich source of revenue. With a set-up like this, one would imagine that movement of contraband to and from the Homeworlds would be impossible, yet it still occurs regularly, with an estimated detection rate of only 40%. VASA are typically tight-lipped about why this should be so, but there have been in the past a number of scandals involving VASA customs personnel. These include involvement in drugs trafficking, slavery and gun running, amongst other things. Rumours abound regarding a secret society of organised

criminals that have infiltrated the VASA infrastructure.

Perhaps more important than the customs operation, Himera is the base for Sec-Net. Sec-Net is a galaxy-wide military communications web, run by ten linked quantum-mainframe computers on Himera. Each of these machines is located in its own secret bunker, complete with its military intelligence staff and

technicians to service it. Designed by a coalition of the galaxy's best engineers the quantum computers are capable of storing vast amounts of data and processing many terabytes per second. They do this by tapping extra-dimensional sources to spontaneously generate energy, effectively teleporting data. Every VASA base throughout the galaxy has terminals linked by sub-ether

relay to Sec-Net; and there are also terminals aboard many ships, satellites and deep space probes. Basically this facilitates a vast communications network, allowing VASA to react swiftly to any problem, whether this be Koralon activity, cosmic disasters, or the imperialistic posturings of other human powers.

Kothon

Kothon is a large ice moon composed of the remnants from a planet that once occupied the closest orbit to Leviathan. When the massive star underwent its death-spasms this world was destroyed, reduced to a cloud of gas and shattered rock. Some of this material fell into orbit around Vacillus, compressing and accreting to form Kothon. The rest carried on to be captured by Uruk, where it formed that planet's five moons. Of course aeons have passed since this happened, and now Kothon is a smooth, inert sphere of rock covered in a surface layer of ice and frozen noble gases and halogens that is a uniform fifteen kilometres thick.

Cut into the ice is a complex of trenches, sub-surface hangers and bunkers that honeycomb the entire permafrost layer. Within these frozen warrens the might of the Vacillus military fleet is berthed, hidden away from prying eyes below the deceptively blank veil of ice. The access routes to the vast hangers are deep, wide trenches, carved out by fusion drills. At short intervals along the walls of these trenches are defence ports, in case the unthinkable should ever happen and Kothon come under attack. Each one of these defence ports is a weapon emplacement pod, equipped with a VR controlled primary weapon operated by a technician back in one of the sub-surface bunkers. These are mostly heavy ion

cannons, but there are also ion torpedo launchers, quantum mine layers and flux wall generators. Of course the most visually impressive thing about Kothon is the space harbour. A man-made construction that surrounds the entire moon like a ring around a gas giant. As aforementioned, all flights through the grav-well must stop for customs processing at the harbour. This also acts as a pick-up point for cargoes, with short-haul flights moving back and forth between the Homeworlds and Vacillus. Many grav-drive equipped ships will move cargoes through the grav-well, to and from colonies in the wider galaxy, but never get any further into the Leviathan/Viridia-Solaris system than Kothon.



The Southern Ice Wastes

The Southern Ice Wastes is a bleak region consisting of shifting glaciers, high, mountainous peaks and unstable floes of Vacillus's thinnest ice, resting atop an inert ocean called the Sea of Mirrors. No life exists in this cold, inhospitable land; indeed never has existed since at least prior to the time Leviathan shed its planetary shell. The lack of a fossil record on Vacillus has convinced most palaeontologists that in fact no life has ever existed on the planet. The only things that move on the surface are sleds from the few research pods scattered about

the region, and skimmers carrying sightseers on day trips out from Himeria.

In spite of these somewhat inalienable facts, legends persist regarding the Ice Dragons of Vacillus. A surprising number of superstitious people believe that creatures from the planet's dim history have survived until the present day, by living in pockets of nutrient rich waters enclosed beneath the ice floes of the Southern Wastes. According to geologists this area was frozen over before Leviathan's catastrophe. Theorists claim that in

the sealed ice caverns whole ecosystems thrive, the food chain dominated by the fantastical Ice Dragons. Conspiracy buffs even suggest that these creatures have attacked research stations and VASA control has hushed up such incidents to prevent panic. Experts of course dismiss these ideas as nonsense, but VASA tacitly encourages rich, credulous tourists from the Gate Worlds to come and take commercial tours of the Ice Wastes, and maybe, just maybe see a dragon. Some of them even believe that they have.

Gate Worlds

Gate Worlds are rich colonies located close to objects that create good, efficient grav-wells. Such objects include dead stars like Leviathan, large planets, large, static accretions of rock and ice debris, and certain gravitic anomalies that result in pockets of intense gravity. Many of these colonies are old, independent worlds settled in the rush to leave the Homeworlds and strike it rich elsewhere. Those colonies that could exploit grav-shunting because of their locations inevitably prospered from the trade generated. For security reasons most of these worlds were willing to sign up to the Treaty of Vacillus, guaranteeing VASA protection for them. Those that didn't sign inevitably ended up being conquered by aggressive neighbours.

VASA places paramount strategic importance on these worlds, maintaining large military harbours and garrisons at them. This is because the gate worlds are effectively the highways of the galaxy. All of the major trade

routes in pan-humanic space run through the gate worlds. Independent gate worlds retain their sovereignty (it would be outside VASA's remit and a black day for liberty if the protectorate decided to annex them) and pay taxes to VASA for the upkeep of defence fleets and troops. There are also a number of artificial gate worlds, all of which belong to VASA and represent a recent technological development—planet construction. It was noted from probe data that many grav-wells were far away from any objects that could be reasonably colonised. Therefore to open up new shipping lanes, VASA engineers took modular building techniques that one stage further. These artificial worlds start life as a large starship-sized plasma reactor in orbit around the source of the grav-well. Over time fleets of construction crews move in through the grav-well building up the structure from the inside out, adding co-reactors, engineering decks and finally factories, hangers, cargo bays, living

quarters, life support systems and so on. The finished object is a small planet-sized sphere and takes about fifteen years to complete using current techniques. The first artificial planet was called Kurosawa, and continues to serve traffic through the Novus grav-well. Others include Hideo at the Ordo grav-well and Tomoe at the Seclorum grav-well. Not all are success stories though, and Io at the Connery grav-well is notorious for a labour scandal in which drug runners supplied the workforce with illegal stimulants. This was done with the full knowledge and complicity of management, in order to meet unreasonable work schedules. 'Stimmers', the drugs involved, were of a similar composition to combat drugs given to Junker Suicide Bombers and over time caused psychotic side effects. Deaths were involved, and a major scandal ensued that VASA couldn't keep the lid on—the project is still languishing as the legal rows continue.



The VASA Fleet

VASA has a very large fleet and some of the best and most expensive ship technology available to anyone. The ships' designs tend to be roughly cigar shaped for the larger craft, and lozenge shaped for the smaller ones. These basic forms are filled out with curves and domes, echoing the modular pods of VASA architecture. Indeed the craft are assembled in modular sections, in common with most other VASA construction technologies. There are five basic size classes of VASA military craft, the largest being Raptor class heavy destroyers. One down from this is the Eagle class standard destroyer. In the middle are Harrier class corvettes. The basic fighter in VASA fleets is the Hawk class battle cruiser, and finally, smaller than the battle cruiser is the Tercel class patrol cruiser. These craft are usually

armed with high-tech heavy ion weaponry—cannons, torpedoes, mines and so on. They are supported in battle by light interceptors and assault craft stored in hangers aboard the vessels. Most also have grav-shunting capability.

Grav-shunting devices consist of a Xaser, a four-barrelled X-ray amplifier attached to a powerful holographic grav-shunt computer. The pilots and navigators are all linked into a VR sim generated by the ship's sensors when a jump is underway. The computer makes a five-dimensional topographical map of the grav-well being targeted, and imposes a cursor of the target grav-well behind this (based on astronomical maps and probe data). The navigators will fire up the Xaser when the senior pilot gives the word, and the sim will show how the grav-well grows

and lengthens. The navigators control the formation of the grav-well through five-dimensional space by manipulating the Xaser. When the grav-well extends far enough, it will touch the bottom of the target grav-well, opening up a wormhole. This effect can be observed in reality as a great swirling tunnel, spiralling open like an iris valve in front of the ship and discharging EM flares into the ether. The pilots gun the engines and the ship disappears into the grav-well. Inside, the pilots must steer the ship, whilst the navigators use the Xaser to maintain the wormhole's integrity. The technology and training used nowadays means that accidents virtually never occur, but every now and then there is a tragedy involving a ship tearing through the wall of the tunnel, or the wormhole collapsing.



Meta Temples

Meta Temples is the name by which most citizens refer to the training institutes of the Meta Knights, Temple Academy of Exceptional Vocation and so forth being a bit of a mouthful. The standard training for all disciplines takes place in VASA cities at the Temple Academies of Exceptional Vocation, but there are other, more mysterious and remote Meta Temples for specialist training in the individual disciplines...

Temple Academies of the Higher Powers

Meta Knights have a hierarchical education system based on the determination and potential of the individuals being trained. Most of those attending a Temple Academy of Exceptional Vocation will graduate with a single meta-power, an ability to place them in an elite league of super humans. Thereafter they will be initiated into a new life as VASA special agents. Many won't even manage a single discipline though, and drop out before the training is complete. An elite few, the elite of the elite if you will, demonstrate such talent that they are selected for further training.

This training takes place at mysterious, isolated worlds on the outskirts of planetary systems, and are completely given over to the purpose of training those who make the grade. Apart from military security stations and a

spaceport, the only pod complex on such a world will be the portentously named Temple Academy of the Higher Powers. Elite Shuriken Guard staff the security stations, grav-wing troops who actually receive combat training at the Temple-Academies. In contrast to other VASA settlements, conurbation is discouraged on worlds supporting the higher Meta Temples. Instead, if it's necessary, terraforming techniques are used to create beautiful wildernesses in which to set the temples. This keys into ideas of the majesty of nature and solitude, apparent in the ancient teachings of the warrior-monk sect upon whose lifestyle the training regime is based. It also reminds modern Meta Knights that human beings control nature, including the functions of their own bodies.

Each Temple Academy of the Higher Powers concentrates on a single meta-discipline, and the regime within the walls reflects this. When graduating Meta Knights arrive at the Meta Temple, they're known as Knight-Adepts of whatever power is their speciality, e.g. Knight-Adept of Fury, Knight-Adept of Balance (prior to achieving their first discipline they are Novices). Once candidates learn a second discipline of their chosen meta-power they become Knight-Masters, e.g. Knight-Master of Fury, Knight-Master of Balance. Finally, a very few Knight-Masters will go on to become Grand Masters, having learned three disciplines of their meta-power. So far as anyone is aware, no individual has managed to learn either more than three disciplines, or to learn disciplines from more than one power. The Meta-Temple

will contain between twenty and one hundred candidates depending on its size and is run by a Sensei and his or her staff. The Sensei will be a highly experienced Meta Knight, usually a Grand Master of their chosen power, and will have their own, inimitable training method. Temple Academies of Fury are vibrant, busy places at most times of the day, containing many exercise yards filled with candidates undergoing weapons and fitness training. The training is very physically demanding, involving staged fights between candidates or between candidates and trainers, endurance training, which involves being hit, stabbed, shot at and so on, and various other painful methods such as balancing

on spikes and breaking concrete blocks over one's head. Temple Academies of Spirit, by contrast, are studious, meditative places, somewhere between the atmosphere of a library and a chapel. The candidates spend much of their time in meditation and study of ancient scriptures and modern treatise on philosophy, religion, military strategy, quantum mechanics and so on. Training takes the form of mental sparring contests, where candidates and trainers focus and merge their thought patterns to create a consensual group hallucination, similar in many ways to the VR routines used in basic training of Spirit disciplines. This however is a much more direct and dangerous method, where anything goes and

the trainers must see to it that no one loses control. The clash of such powerful and focused wills can lead to madness, even death, if not for the guidance of the more experienced practitioners. Finally, and most unusually, the Temple Academies of Balance keep all of their candidates separate. In fact the candidates never even see their trainers or Sensei, and are unaware that they are actually undergoing training. They are kept isolated within a relatively large, controlled environment. Within this arena they must overcome certain challenges, based on developing their abilities of poise, balance and stealth, to survive. By the time Knight-Adepts have learned how to escape this arena, they will be Knight-Masters.

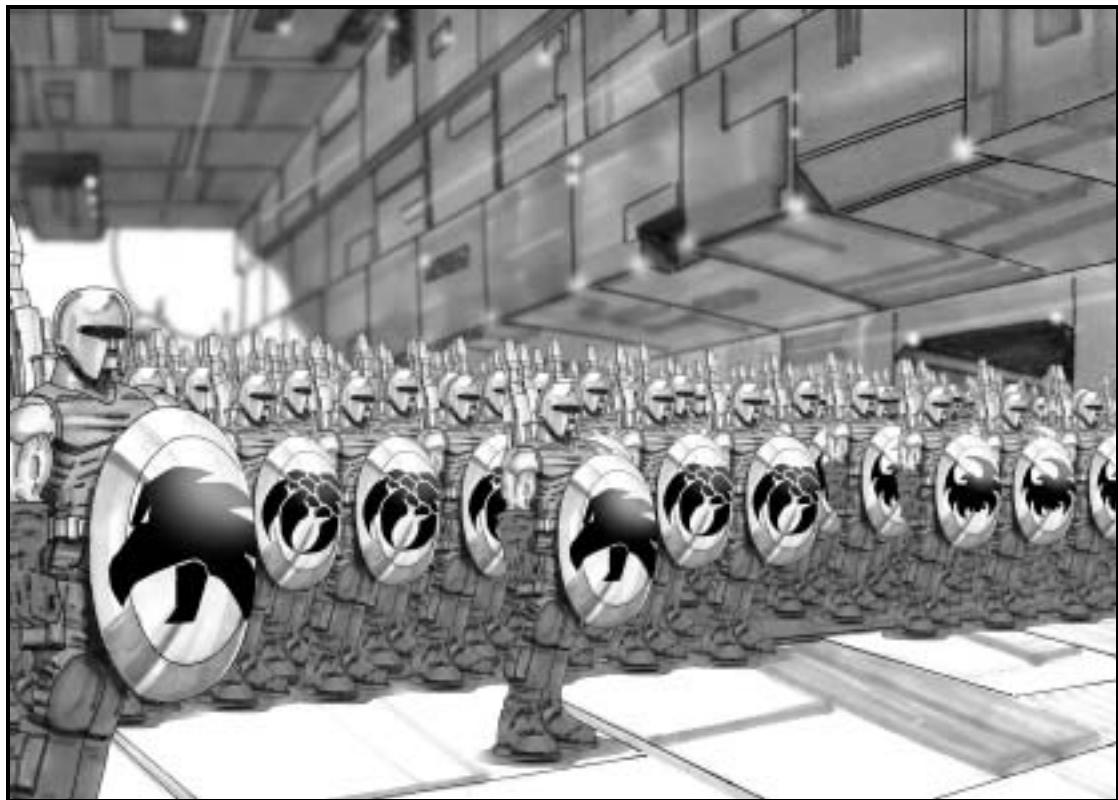
The Temple of Dawn: A Profile of a Temple-Academy of the Higher Powers

The Temple of Dawn is one of the oldest Meta Temples in the galaxy. Over five hundred years old, the venerable pod complex stands atop a magnificent, overgrown rocky outcrop. It is located on the mountainous, heavily forested world of Zanshin. The Temple of Dawn has been dedicated to the further training of Knight-Adepts of Balance throughout its history, and VASA control regards it as a shining example of best practise. The first Sensei of the Temple of Dawn was an expert on Balance techniques called Masadoko, and he is credited with developing the *Flight of the Tengu* meta-discipline. Other illustrious Sensei have included Spy Mistress Amaterasu, who was responsible for the assassinations of more wild card demagogues and diplomatic enemies of the VASA organisation than any other individual in history, and Grand Master Hachiman, who pioneered the concept of graduation by ordeal for Knight-Masters of Balance.

The current Sensei of the Temple of Dawn is Grand Master Moto, who has been in charge at the Meta-Temple for four years. Prior to this Moto served VASA secret services for fifteen years, and has carried out solo missions in combat zones all across the galaxy. It is even rumoured that Moto carried out a solo sabotage mission on an artificial planet, which had been occupied by striking construction crews and blew up under mysterious circumstances. Serving under Grand-Master Moto is a staff of twenty-three trainers, five of whom are Grand Masters of Balance like himself and the rest of whom are Knight-Masters of Balance.

All of Zanshin acts as a massive arena for the training of candidates. The routine for introducing them to the survival environment is always the same. Graduating Knight-Adepts of Balance that have shown the necessary prowess, and are assigned to the Temple of Dawn for further training, get on a flight

ostensibly to be briefed for their first mission. Thus begins an elaborate ruse in which the ship is sabotaged and forced to ditch on a strange planet (Zanshin) and the Knight-Adept is the only survivor of the crash. Moto and his staff have divided the planet into numerous zones, each designed to test candidates in a different way, and stage-manage various ordeals for them, involving the basic scenario that they're being hunted by an unknown and hostile force. It can take up to five years of running and paranoia before a candidate solves (or is allowed to solve) the puzzle of what is happening to them and why. After this they should have developed a new meta-discipline as well as honing other talents of the Meta Knights of Balance. This method of training, developed at the Temple of Dawn by Grand Master Hachiman provides the model for Temple Academies of Balance throughout the galaxy.



The New Galactic Order

Sec Net Bulletin to all Systems Operators...

++ The following article was removed from the public access galaxy web. An unknown hacker posted it, and some of the data contained within has come from Sec-Net, and is therefore unsuitable for public viewing. This is an abridged version of the material, and as usual a full transcript is available on request, and subject to clearance level. Control would like us all to be more vigilant in future! ++

Following a year in which the external threat of the Koralon is becoming more remote I compiled this dossier. It's not that they're any less active, simply that the media have lost interest (wonder why that is, eh?). I'll let you draw your own conclusions, but I think the facts speak for themselves. A new galactic order is in its infancy here, and I don't see how VASA and the other powers that be can resist it if they carry on as they're going. Hell, maybe they're in on it too...

Rumours & Portents

Here's a couple of snippets that I think are quite significant.

The [REDACTED] Planetary Enquirer [REDACTED]

Crab Babies! [REDACTED] most miraculous freaks!

Young Janet and John, aged two, are the planet's most incredible twins. And their unique condition could mean that they hold the keys to amazing, new medical breakthroughs. The twins' mum Maureen says that she couldn't be more proud.

The twins have a strange, congenital birth defect, which means they've been born with extra limbs. Instead of the usual brace of legs, these tearaway

toddlers have four each, and this has meant that they were walking at a very early age—and now that they're two-years-old, poor old mum has quite a time keeping up with them! Paediatricians initially surmised that the twins may have been quads, two of which became absorbed twins, but tests and other aspects of the condition have ruled that there is something much more fascinating going on.

They're also hairless, and according to doctors will never grow any hair. The twins both have crests of an unusual, keratinous material that forms a thin line down the middle of their scalps, disappearing at the nape, but resuming again from the

shoulders to the base of the spine. Plastic surgeons have attempted to remove the crest, but it grows back again within a couple of days. And this is what has the boffins all in a flap. According to an insider, the crests apparently have regenerative powers that could open up new areas of research into emergency surgery, limb and organ reconstruction, and the biggest mystery of all—a cure for death! The ██████████ Biotech Research Institute has refused to comment.

And what do the twins think of all this? Well they don't actually talk, which is another aspect of the condition, but they seem to communicate in ways the boffins have yet to understand.

Sec-Net Internal Bulletin on new type of meta-talent

Mutant Meta-Profiling

It has become apparent to VASA Control over the last few months that we have missed out a specific group of people in our standard 'Traversing the Void' meta-tests. This group is of course the so-called mutants. Firstly to define what we mean by mutant, we are talking about a new phenomenon, a group of people that have emerged seemingly from nowhere over the last two generations. We are not talking about people with a recognisable or traceable genetic or physical abnormality. The mutants are characterised by various degrees of unusual physical attributes—some are as obvious as additional limbs or other prominent growths, others have no visible clues to their condition but may have unique blood types or metabolic features. Most have some very minor physical marker of their condition: perhaps no hair, extra fingers or toes, or perhaps an unusually coloured eye. Again, it is important to realise that many normal people exhibit such features too, but mutants are a result of a common, but as yet undefined

change in their DNA. Cosmic radiation, alien viruses, or a new stage in human evolution are amongst some of the theories proposed to explain why these people have begun to appear.

It has come to the attention of technicians that mutants don't respond to the 'Traversing the Void' routine as other humans do. This has gone unnoticed for some time because the automated system looks for spikes in brain activity indicating meta-waves, which have been triggered by a fear response. A recent audit of archive data on other metabolic functions has shown that mutants don't show the same panic symptoms as other people on the simulation, thus rendering it useless for detecting meta-waves. Preliminary tests on groups of mutants using more traditional methods for detecting psychic talents, such as the playing card test, has shown that 70% of the subjects display 'receiver' abilities within their group. This means that as long as another mutant is broadcasting a mental image of a playing card, or any other object, the subjects can pick it up and correctly identify the object. This is very exciting, and the massive 70% score beggars belief when compared to other control groups. So far they have demonstrated no other meta-abilities, but they have highly ordered minds displaying excellence in geometry, mathematics, structural engineering, classification and other typically left brain functions. Experiments are continuing.

Something is definitely brewing!

This is another press snippet, this time about one of the numerous demonstrations and riots that have been breaking out across pan-humanic space. This one was pulled off Sec-Net where it had been archived as F-Notice material—it has never been published prior to this bulletin.

The ██████████ Mail ██████████
Koralon Lovers clash with Suppressor Squads.
Shuriken Guard drafted in to assist!

Several people have been killed and scores more injured during a day of rioting yesterday, which saw the deployment of the Shuriken Guard against civilians for the first time in this planet's history. The trouble started when crowds gathered outside the Emperor's Palace, chanting and waving anti-VASA slogans. Suppressor squads moved in to clear the entrance and allow access for tourists to Their Serene Majesties, but organised troublemakers in the crowd subjected the Suppressors to a barrage of improvised missile fire. The Suppressors responded by sending in Ronin Urban Assault vehicles, in an attempt to disperse the crowd with tear gas and water cannons. Organisation was apparent again amongst the rioters though, for many had come equipped with gas masks and military surplus battle shields. One Ronin was overturned and set on fire by the crowd, its crew dragged from the wreckage and badly beaten. With the crowd proving recalcitrant, the Shuriken Guard from the palace were called in to assist, but even this measure failed to move them on, so the authorities were left with no choice but to allow the Shuriken Guard to deploy live rounds. Eight protestors were killed in the ensuing melee and many more hospitalised, but the action was successful and the palace has returned to its normal business.

The protestors were a disparate bunch of factions including anti-VASA extremists, mutant rights protestors, liberals, and individuals purporting to be from pro-Koralon organisations. They were united by a common thread of resistance to the continuing campaign against alien invaders on the Galactic Fringe. Spokespersons for the protestors claim that VASA is engaged in an unjust war, against

a race that desires only to be our allies and to trade and share technologies with us. VASA has dismissed such claims as impossible, issuing the following statement:

'The Koralon are a race of beings inimical to humanity. They do not intend to ally with humans, but to first conquer us, then assimilate us into hybrid drones by infecting us with mutagenic agents. This is nothing short of biological warfare, which is banned between human powers under the Treaty of Vacillus. The claims of certain organisations that the Koralon wish to engage in talks with human leaders are demonstrably false since no common method of communication has been established between ourselves and this species—therefore, how could the protestors possibly know such things? If they have a plausible answer to this question then VASA control would love to hear about it.'

There has been a worrying trend amongst the pro-Koralon and mutant rights alliance, who seem to be involved in stirring up a new religious movement which worships the aliens as some kind of new gods. VASA are said to be considering emergency legislation to outlaw these organisations under anti-terrorist law and the rarely invoked cults and sects ordinance. In a secular age it seems that this new religious mania is rapidly achieving pop-phenomenon status and VASA will have its work cut out balancing freedom of worship against the more sinister elements of these Koralon worshipping cults.

And the main news tonight...

Well the big news at the moment is the Suppressors' siege of the Church of the New Consciousness, which just happens to be located on Emerald Shoal, on my own little Gate World of Geiger. Here's an official galaxy web article on the incident, as well as my own

interview with a supporter of the people inside the church complex.

Siege at Emerald Shoal

Emerald Shoal is a beautiful, seafront development on the south-west coast of the Absu Ocean, on the prosperous Gate World of Geiger. Clinging to the cliffs overlooking Emerald Shoal is a complex of experimental luxury apartments, which never sold on account of their inaccessibility and isolation from the rest of the Marina. About two years ago a man calling himself Reverend Loligo bought up this doomed piece of real estate for a bargain price. By this time the buildings had fallen into some disrepair, but instead of calling in developers he began inviting people to join an organisation called the Church of the New Consciousness. We know that Loligo stressed in his literature that mutants were particularly welcome, and that the so-called 'New Consciousness' was somehow related to mutants.

Loligo is an enigmatic character who is almost certainly insane. He hails from the small independent agri-world of Nimrod IX and his real name is Erlich Tintagel. His family say that he went on a voyage of self-discovery around the rim worlds and when he came back, he was full of strange, quasi-religious notions. Loligo himself, as confirmed by his parents, has minor mutant characteristics—webbed hands and a small bony ridge down his back. He was bullied throughout his school life on Nimrod IX because of these differences and is somewhat obsessed by his condition.

Since moving into the cliffside Emerald Shoal complex, Loligo has built up a substantial following of some two hundred people, mostly mutants, but also normal people who support his strange vision. And what is this vision you may ask? Well, Loligo says that in order for the human race to evolve we must all embrace the idea that

mutants are the next step, and that mutants have evolved a different kind of consciousness—the more efficient 'New Consciousness'. Therefore mutants should marry so-called normal people to ensure that the next generation of children will enjoy this new consciousness. This is the work Loligo has been engaged in at Emerald Shoal for the last two years.

About six months ago residents of Emerald Shoal Marina began to complain that strange rituals and disturbances were taking place at the Church of the New Consciousness. Concerns were also raised about conditions within the complex, and the possibility that people were being held against their will. When security forces tried to investigate these allegations, Loligo refused to admit them entry to the complex. When they returned with warrants, it became apparent that Loligo had been stockpiling weapons at the church, and gauss rifle and shotgun fire was exchanged. That was eight days ago. Since then Suppressor squads have laid siege to the complex, but Loligo and his brainwashed cohorts have taken many of the women and children hostage, threatening a mass suicide bid (clearly homicide in the case of the hostages), if the security forces attempt to come in. Earlier this morning Bird of Prey battlesuits were drafted in, and supported by snipers they stormed the complex using their grav-wings, engaging the cultists with rocket pods and close assault power weapons. It is too early to say what the casualties are like within, but there has been a lot of gauss weapon fire throughout the assault, which lasted three hours. Parts of the complex are also ablaze at the time of writing this report, and it certainly seems like the siege is at an end.

What remains to be calculated is the cost of one man's twisted childhood obsession.

On other pages: VASA psychological profilers give their views on Cult Syndrome; an insight into the mind of a madman—extracts from Loligo's case history; and the new threat of the mutant movement.

A Fresh Perspective: My interview with a protestor.

I made my way down to Emerald Shoal while all of this was winding up, and spoke to a supporter of Loligo who was attending a protest against the Suppressors' action. Funny that no major media network thought of doing that...

ME: I'm at the scene of what looks like it could well be a massacre, here at Emerald Shoal where

earlier this morning Bird of Prey squads stormed the controversial Church of the New Consciousness. With me is Chloe, a supporter of Reverend Loligo, who has come to protest against the actions of the VASA Suppressors. Why are you protesting Chloe?

CHLOE: Well, the Suppressors haven't just suppressed this situation, they've totally suppressed the truth and those other reporters are their mouthpieces.

ME: In what way?

CHLOE: Well, they said that the Reverend had taken hostages in there, but that's not true. When this thing started a few people got out, they're with us here. According to them anyone was free to leave, but once the

Suppressor snipers turned up, anyone that tried to go was a target. People aren't hostages in there; they're pinned down.

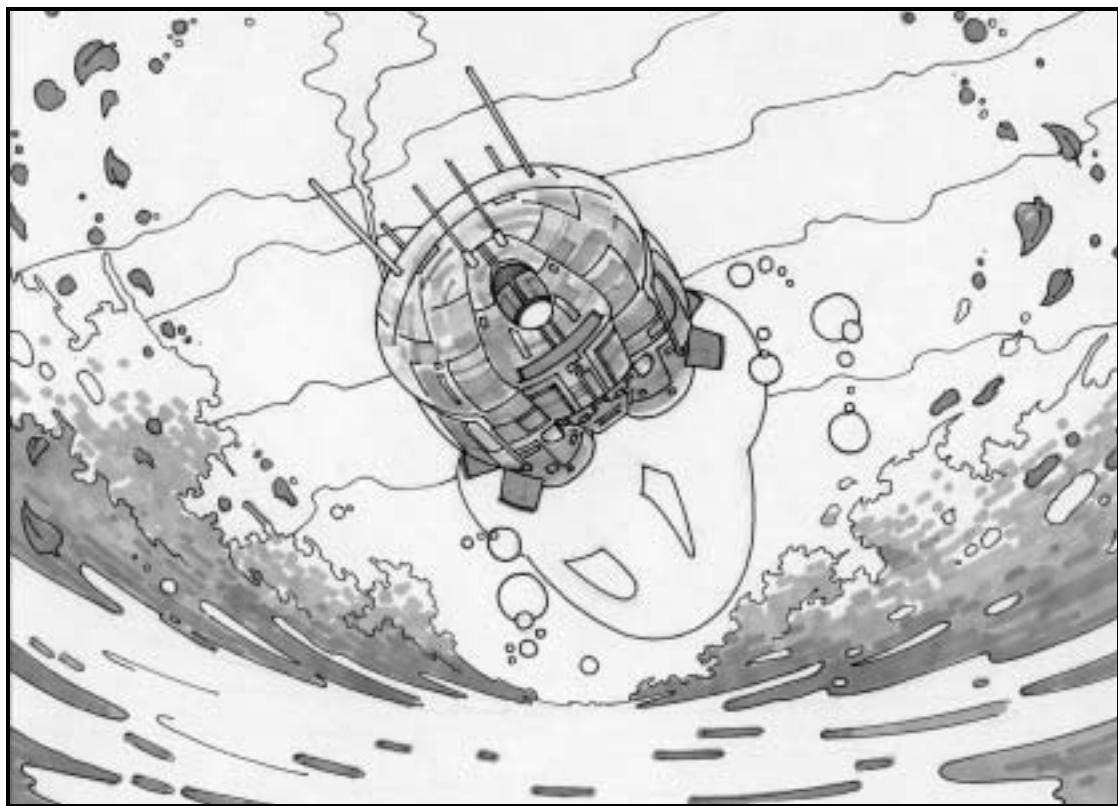
ME: What about reports that the Reverend started putting a mass suicide plan into action, which was why the complex was stormed?

CHLOE: The whole point of the Church was to bring mutants and normals together, so that they could raise families together and the children would share in the new consciousness. We're a life church, not a death cult—suicide would make no sense.

ME: Thank you Chloe.

Make of it what you will dear reader...





Unexpected Company

++ Sec-Net Bulletin: The battle to retake Argent IV from occupying Koralon forces has been an outright success. A combined army of VASA and Viridian infantry has shattered the surprisingly low level of alien resistance. A Viridian garrison will remain on Argent IV until mining operations can be resumed, probably later on this year ++

Later on that year...

'What the hell is this place anyway, cap?'

Captain Coyle of the Viridian 19th Astro-Rangers Company grimaced and slowly surveyed the broken, barren promontory, lapped by a dank, weed choked ocean. Then he answered the marine by his side.

'Well Rasmussen, according to the Major, who under the strict chain-of-command is the one who I ask goddamn stupid questions of, it is a silver mining outpost.'

Coyle's platoon had been dropped on Argent IV earlier that day to take a three month tour of babysitting the small, rocky world. It was getting towards the evening watch, the bluish twin suns hanging low in the angry purple sky, when Coyle and Rasmussen, the platoon's grenade launcher specialist, had come up to the ramparts of the small, rickety prefab marine barracks to indulge in a smoke. Coyle was a solid, no-

nonsense soldier, with a scar given him by a Junker legionary depending from the corner of his mouth. Rasmussen was a full head taller than Coyle was, and had the innocent air of a rookie.

Rasmussen smiled at the old man's attitude; he'd met veterans before and was used to their world-weary attitude. Taking the answer as a cue to shut up, he relaxed into the silence and rested his elbows on the carbon nanotube parapet, scanning the middle distance. Yep, there was no talking to these guys, they'd seen it all before.

'What, in the name of all that is decent, is that? I've never seen anything like that before!' cried Coyle.

Startled out of his reverie, Rasmussen squinted in the failing light. At first he was only aware of the approaching lights of a patrol jeep, bumping towards them over the broken rocks. Then he saw the tumbling mass of shadows behind

it, like a cloud of enormous bats. Seconds later the lights were engulfed, and although it was a couple of clicks away, the screams were all too clear.

Coyle and Rasmussen looked at one another with wide eyes and open mouths.

'Get the Major, Rasmussen. We've got a situation here.'

Archangel Commander Izanami of the *Fluttering Kite*, a Tercel class patrol cruiser out of the Ainu harbour, listened one more time to the cycling mayday beacon coming through the ship's comm-system.

'We cannot wait until reinforcements arrive before we respond to this,' she said to her crew. 'It is a category 4 security alert and our course of action is clear under the VASA response guidelines.'

'But Commander,' said Archangel Kuniyoshi, 'we have no intelligence regarding the situation on Argent

IV. Surely it is suicide to go in blind with such a limited force.'

'Silence trooper. You will do your duty and die if necessary, that is your purpose. We are the only vessel in this quadrant that can respond in reasonable time. Weapons and grav-wing prep for inspection by 0600 hours. We shunt at 0700.'

It was approaching midday on the second day of the siege. Rasmussen dropped down below the parapet, covering his head with his arms. A shard bomb whistled overhead and detonated in the compound behind him with a low thud. There were Koralon everywhere, overrunning the entire compound. The Viridians were surrounded on all four sides by a slavering horde of aliens. This was why Argent IV had been so

easy to take; last year's relief force must have only faced about half the aliens, the rest hiding out in that scummy ocean below. And now they were bolstered by a hefty contingent of Araktons—miners listed KIA after the initial incident, according to Coyle.

The Koralon were now under the fire arcs of the wall-mounted gauss cannons, seemingly undeterred by the piles of blasted carcasses they'd left on the approach. Rasmussen was deeply afraid—he'd no idea anything could be this relentless. He ruefully regarded his grenade launcher, useless for the fighting they'd be imminently engaged in... if only we had some decent close assault troops.

At that moment a sleek, dark object came screaming out of the clear sky, thundering right over the

barracks and leaving a pressure wave in its wake that threw a number of Viridians and Koralon alike to the ground. It entered the ocean like a thunderbolt, sending up a great plume of froth. An instant later it emerged on the other side of the promontory and hatches hissed open on the roof. From his position on the wall Rasmussen could clearly see the word VASA. Black clad figures emerged from the hatch, unfolding great silvery grav-wings behind them. Moments later an Archangel dropped neatly on to the wall in front of Rasmussen, kicked off an Arakton that had clambered up to the parapet, and discharged a clip into the melee below.

She turned coolly to Rasmussen, 'I'm Commander Izanami. We're here to relieve you.'



Knights of the Void

Knights of the Void are near legendary individuals who have trained in esoteric arts that allow them to perform amazing feats on the battlefield. They use a combination of strict mental disciplines that take years to learn, and strange energy focussing devices to manifest their so-called Meta Powers. There are different vocational paths open to potential knights – Fury, Spirit and Balance. Each discipline focuses a Knight's natural abilities in a radically different way.

Knights of Fury

Knights of Fury are incredible martial artists, able to perform displays of superhuman fighting prowess and seemingly impossible feats of strength and speed. Of all the knightly orders they are the best loved by the common soldiery.

Knight of Fury

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 |

Structure:

Individual

Minimum Unit Size: 0

Maximum Unit Size: 1

You may add a Knight of Fury to any of the following units, using the same buying criteria as sergeants: VASA Marines, VASA Militia, VASA Suppressor Squads.

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|------|
| Knight Adept of Fury | Ion Lance, Blaster | 0-1 | 38 |
| Knight Master of Fury | Ion Lance, Blaster | 0-1 | 50 |
| Grand Master of Fury | Ion Lance, Blaster | 0-1 | 66 |

Special Rules:

All Knights of Fury: Tactical Awareness, Fearless, Immune to Panic, Inspiring
Knight Adept of Fury: Meta Powers 1
Knight Master of Fury: Meta Powers 2
Grand Master of Fury: Meta Powers 3

Knights of Spirit

Knights of Spirit are powerful psychics, able to plant telepathic suggestions, predict the future and even manipulate matter with their minds. Many fear the Spirit Knights and those who have stood against them in battle recount experiencing terrible visions and past nightmares when in close proximity to them.

Knight Of Spirit

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 |

Structure:

Individual

Minimum Unit Size: 0

Maximum Unit Size: 1

You may add a Knight of Spirit to any of the following units, using the same buying criteria as Sergeants: VASA Marines, VASA Militia, VASA Suppressor Squads.

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|------|
| Knight Adept of Spirit | Blaster | 0-1 | 42 |
| Knight Master of Spirit | Blaster | 0-1 | 54 |
| Grand Master of Spirit | Blaster | 0-1 | 70 |

Special Rules:

All Knights of Spirit: Tactical Awareness, Immune to Panic, Terrifying
Knight Adept of Spirit: Meta Powers 1
Knight Master of Spirit: Meta Powers 2
Grand Master of Spirit: Meta Powers 3

Knights of Balance

Knights of Balance are spies and assassins beyond compare. They are so utterly focussed and attuned to their surroundings that they can pass unseen by the most vigilant guards, and they can control their own metabolism to move at incredible speeds and perform amazing gymnastic feats. They are loners by disposition, never joining other units, and are deeply mistrusted by most of their comrades.

Knight Of Balance

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 5 |

Structure:

Individual

Minimum Unit Size: 0

Maximum Unit Size: 1

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| Knight Adept of Balance | Sniper Rifle, 2 Combat Blades | 0-1 | 59 |
| Knight Master of Balance | Sniper Rifle, 2 Combat Blades | 0-1 | 71 |
| Grand Master of Balance | Sniper Rifle, 2 Combat Blades | 0-1 | 87 |

Special Rules:

All Knights of Balance: Tactical Awareness, Fearless, Dodge, Stealth

Knight Adept of Balance: Meta Powers 1

Knight Master of Balance: Meta Powers 2

Grand Master of Balance: Meta Powers 3

Suppressor Squads

Suppressor Squads are units of VASA troops specifically trained to combat civil unrest and domestic strife.

They are faceless figures of authority, and although many of their weapons are non-lethal, their reputation is fearless nonetheless.

Indeed, many of the Galaxy's 'sleazier' tabloid newscasts refer to them as "Oppressor Squads". Until they are taken off air, that is.

Suppressors

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 |

Structure:

Squad

Minimum Unit Size: 4

Maximum Unit Size: 12

You may include a maximum of 1 Support model for every 3 other models

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|------------------|--|--------------|------|
| Suppressor | Gauss Rifle ¹ , Combat Blade ² , Battleshield | 4-12 | 18 |
| Grenade Launcher | Grenade Launcher ¹ , Combat Blade ² , Battleshield | 0-2 | 31 |
| Sniper | Sniper Rifle, Combat Blade ² , Battleshield | 0-2 | 29 |
| Sergeant | Gauss Rifle ¹ , Combat Blade ² , Battleshield | 0-1 | 19 |

Special Rules:

Sniper: Sniper, Marksman

Grenade Launcher: Tactical Awareness

Sergeant: Tactical Awareness, High Morale (+1)

¹Suppressors often fight in situations where they would rather not kill their enemies of at all possible. A unit of suppressors may have all its members with Gauss rifles fire Rubber Bullets instead of normal flechettes. Rubber bullets do not cause any casualties. Instead, roll to hit as normal, and if any hits are scored, the unit to which the models hit belong, must immediately test for Panic. Similarly, a Suppressor armed with a Grenade Launcher may choose to fire Tear Gas instead of normal fragmentation grenades. Roll to hit as normal (and for deviation if applicable). Tear Gas causes no casualties. Instead, a unit that has at least one member touched by a Tear Gas template must immediately test for Panic. Vehicles and any unit which is Immune to Panic is unaffected by Rubber Bullets or Tear Gas.

²Suppressor Squads carry Stun Batons – a combination between a nightstick and a taser which is equally effective against humans, 'synths and slugs. It uses the same profile as a Combat Blade, but casualties are not "Killed", they are instead unconscious, which may be important for certain scenarios.

Shuriken Guard

The Shuriken Guard, are the best of the best, elite Grav Wing troops who have received combat training at the Temple Academies of the Higher Powers.

As such they are privy to the secrets of Sec-Net, and serve as VASA's rapid response strike force, despatched to deal with particularly troublesome situations.

Shuriken Guard

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 |

Structure:

Squad

Minimum Unit Size: 4

Maximum Unit Size: 10

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|----------------|------------|--------------|------|
| Shuriken Guard | 2 Blasters | 4-10 | 53 |
| Sergeant | 2 Blasters | 0-1 | 55 |

Special Rules:

All: Shock Trooper, Fearless, Multiple Shots (x2)

Sergeant: High Morale (+1), Tactical Awareness

Shuriken Guard wear graviton pulse packs like those used by Black Legionaries, Archangels and certain Birds of Prey. They follow the same movement rules as these troops (reprinted below for convenience).

Troops wearing graviton pulse packs may opt to make a grav pulse leap whenever they wish to move and/or assault.

This replaces their normal movement. The following general rules apply to grav pulse leaps:

- Units carrying out assault orders may use pulse packs to charge, but not to close.
- Enemy models charged by a model making a grav pulse leap may not counter charge.
- When making a grav pulse leap, models may ignore obstacles up to 5" in height.

Pulse packs are difficult to guide accurately. Before the unit carries out its move or assault orders, make one CD check for the entire unit (using the highest CD in the unit). If the CD check is passed, the unit may move up to 10" and then continue with its turn as usual. If the CD Check is failed, the leap was mistimed, or a stray gust of wind has upset the Legionaries' tight formation. The unit may still move up to 10", but the following rules also apply:

- If the CD check was failed before carrying out a Move order, the unit suffers an additional -1 'to hit' modifier to any shooting in its current turn.
- If the CD check was failed before carrying out an Assault order, the unit loses all charge bonuses (including bonuses for Special Rules such as Shock Trooper), and can be counter-charged.

VASA Militia

VASA Militia are ordinary citizens who have been pressed into military service during times of crisis. They lack training and equipment and more often than not they have to bring their own weapons and ammunition. VASA garrisons do their best to turn them into decent fighting units, trying to ensure that someone with at least some battlefield experience leads them into battle. When facing an organised military force they tend to die in droves, but if deployed in force they can make a difference.

VASA Militia

| AS | SH | S | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 |

Structure: Squad

Unit Size: 4-12

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|------|
| Militia | Special ¹ | 4-12 | 13 |
| Militia Leader | Autorifle, Combat Blade | 0-1 | 15 |

Special Rules:

Sergeant: Tactical Awareness, High Morale (+1),

¹Militia weapons: Units of Militia are generally rag-tag groups of untrained civilians, equipped with whatever weapons they own or can lay their hands on. As such individual models' weapons may vary wildly from their comrades.

In game terms all Militia are armed the same. Decide whether they come armed with: Autorifle and Combat blade, or Autopistol and Combat Blade. This choice applies to the entire unit, regardless of the weapon actually on any specific model.

Before the start of the game, make sure your opponent knows how they are armed.

Birds of Prey

Birds of Prey are fully enclosed Battlesuits, based originally on the Exosuits used by Junker armed forces (although significantly improved upon).

The most common variant is the Shogun, armed with the potent Ion Katana and a Negatron shield for protection, as well as being equipped with graviton pulse packs.

Rarer are the Crucifier and Typhoon variants, the former designed around a close support role, while the latter is equipped for long-range fire support.

Crucifiers are armed with Cesti and Heavy Grape Guns, and Typhoons incorporate the popular Mini MLRS.

"Shogun" Bird of Prey

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 |

Structure:

Squad

Minimum Unit Size: 1

Maximum Unit Size: 4

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------|
| Shogun | Ion Katana, Negatron Shield | 1-4 | 61 |

Special Rules:

High Morale +2, Multiple Attacks (x2), Lethal Strike (x1)

"Shogun" Birds of Prey are equipped with graviton pulse packs, and follow all the relevant special rules as listed in the Black Legion listing of the Void 1.1 Rulebook.

Shoguns cannot evade.

"Crucifier" Bird of Prey

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 |

Structure:

Individual

Minimum Unit Size: 0

Maximum Unit Size: 1

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| Crucifier | 2 Cesti, 2 Heavy Grape Guns | 0-1 | 62 |

Special Rules:

High Morale +2, Multiple Attacks (x2),
Multiple Shots (x2), Heavy Armour 3, Lethal Strike (x1)

Crucifiers cannot evade

"Typhoon" Bird of Prey

| AS | SH | ST | T | W | CD | SZ | MV |
|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 |

Structure:

Individual

Minimum Unit Size: 0

Maximum Unit Size: 1

| Troop Type | Equipment | No. per Unit | Cost |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------|------|
| Typhoon | Mini MLRS, 2 Cesti | 0-1 | 62 |

Special Rules:

High Morale +2, Heavy Armour 3, Tactical Awareness, Lethal Strike (x1)

Typhoons cannot evade.

Armoury

Autorifle

Autorifle is a generic term that includes many different kinds of weaponry, from commercial hunting or sports rifles, through antique firearms, to obsolete military hardware.

| CC | Short | Medium | Long | Extreme |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| To Hit/ Dam |
| -1/4 | 0/4 | 0/4 | -/- | -/- |

Type:
2-Handed

Special Rules:
None

Ion Katana

The Ion Katana is a massive, energized blade carried by certain Variants of VASA Birds of Prey.

| CC | Short | Medium | Long | Extreme |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| To Hit /Dam |
| +0/6 | -/- | -/- | -/- | -/- |

Type:
1 Handed, Melee, Armour Piercing 2

Special Rules:
None

Special Rules and Abilities

Special Abilities

Dodge

Models with this skill are preternaturally aware or quick, even to the extent of avoiding bullets. Each time they suffer damage, for whatever reason, they can make a CD test, if successful they don't take any damage.

Stealth

Models with stealth are even better at avoiding being seen than models with camouflage. In addition to the normal +1 cover save enjoyed by camouflaged models, models with stealth are considered as being out of LOS for enemy models beyond short range.

If the model makes an aggressive action (charging or shooting at an enemy model) it gives its position away and can be targeted as usual.

Meta Powers

Meta Powers are paranormal feats of mind and body that allow those trained in their use to perform seemingly superhuman acts. They have names that are reminiscent of the ancient rituals upon which they are based. There are three main disciplines of Meta Powers: Fury, Spirit and Balance. A model with Meta Powers should choose a number of powers equal to their Meta Powers level, from the appropriate discipline on the following lists.

Each individual power lists when and how to use it.

Meta Powers of Fury

The Meta Energy of Fury concentrates the will of its students into becoming an unstoppable force. They are capable of incredible battle feats of strength and speed.

Fist of Steel

Fist of Steel is a martial arts strike that focuses an incredible amount of energy into a single blow, with devastating consequences for the victim. Because of the harmonious marriage of power and timing this attack can punch through solid armour using conventional close combat weapons, without damaging the weapon in any way.

Phase: Assault

Effect: Use this power when in base contact with an enemy model (but before any attack rolls are made). The Knight makes a CD test. If successful the knight immediately makes their normal close assault attacks against that opponent. Any damage is worked out with an additional damage modifier equal to the user's Meta Level, and has bonus armour piercing equal to the Meta Level.

If the test fails, this Knight's turn ends immediately.

The Tiger's Fury

With The Tiger's Fury the knight taps into his own primal fear response, turning it against his opponents as a flurry of lightning fast blows. The knight allows his own "Fight or Flight" reflex to momentarily overwhelm his humanity, resulting in an instant of insane rage.

Phase: Assault

Effect: Use this power when in base contact with an enemy model (but before any attack rolls are made). The Knight makes a CD test. If successful, the knight immediately makes his normal close assault attacks plus a number of additional close assault attacks equal to his Metal Level.

If the test fails, the Knight's turn ends immediately.

Battle Feat of Wonder

Battle Feat of Wonder is a thoroughly inspirational gymnastic attack, involving whirling, sweeping and flick-flacking as the knight attacks his or her foes. Friendly troops fighting alongside the knight are as motivated by his display as his enemies are confused and dismayed.

Phase: Assault

Effect: Use this power when in base contact with an enemy model (but before any attack rolls are made).

The Knight makes a CD test.

If successful the knight and any troops with him receive a to hit bonus equal to the knight's Meta Level. This is in addition to any other bonuses they have that turn (E.g. charging).

If the test fails the Knight's turn ends immediately, although the rest of the unit he is with may attack as normal, without the bonus.

Meta Powers of Spirit

Students of the Meta Energy of Spirit learn to control their incredible mental powers, allowing them to read the thoughts of others, generate hallucinations and even affect physical objects with their amazing will.

The Serpent's Deceit

The Serpent's Deceit creates an illusion in the mind of opponents that they are under attack from an imaginary foe. If this is done correctly (and it takes the skill and experience of a dedicated knight to fool trained soldiers) the enemy will waste time and ammunition on the chicane.

Phase: Shooting

Effect: To use this power the knight must have LOS to a member of the enemy unit you wish to affect. At the start of the shooting phase, instead of shooting normally the Knight may attempt to use the Serpent's Deceit.

The Knight makes a CD check. If the Knight fails, this ends the Knight's shooting phase. If successful, the enemy unit then makes a CD check, but applies double the Knight's Meta Level as a negative modifier. (i.e. if a Knight Master is using the power, apply a -4 modifier to the CD Check). If the unit passes this test, the power has no effect, and this ends the Knight's shooting phase.

If the unit fails the test the unit counts as having been activated, and so cannot be activated again until the next turn, and also loses any hold orders.

The Shield of Adamant

The Shield of Adamant is a telekinetic discipline that creates a bubble of invisible flux around the knight. The atoms in the air itself react to the velocity of approaching objects, hardening to prevent even energy bolts and hypersonic rounds. Unfortunately slower attacks can penetrate this shield.

Phase: Move
Effect: Use this power before the knight moves. The Knight makes a CD test.

If successful, the knight and any troops with her gain the Heavy Armour ability equal to double the Knight's Meta Power Level. This ability only works against ranged attacks only – it offers no protection at all from close combat attacks.

The Shield of Adamant lasts until the Knight's next activation.

If the CD Check fails, the Knight may continue with her turn, and may still move, although she may not attempt to use another Meta Power this activation.

Vigilance of the Hawk

Vigilance of the Hawk is an almost prophetic ability to anticipate what an enemy unit is going to do next. The knight with this power becomes aware of the enemy's hostile intentions the instant before they open fire, giving him or her a moment to bark out orders to those under their command to take evasive action.

Phase: Opponent's shooting.

Effect: Use this power when an enemy unit declares their intention to shoot at the knight, or a unit containing the knight. You must declare that you are using this power before any dice are rolled. The Knight makes a CD test. If the Knight fails, continue with the shooting as normal.

If the Knight is successful, the enemy unit then makes a CD check, but applies double the Knight's Meta Level as a negative modifier. (i.e. if a Knight Master is using the power, apply a -4 modifier to the CD Check).

If the unit passes this test, the power has no effect, continue with the shooting as normal. If the shooting unit fails the test they must re-roll all successful 'to Hit' rolls, counting only successful re-rolls as hits. The rest of the attacks are anticipated and avoided.

Note: This is a reactive power and so the Knight may use it every time she is targeted.

Meta Powers of Balance

The Meta Energy of Balance demands an incredible refinement of observation from its students. Only then can they master the arts of stealth and poise.

Veil of Maya

The Veil of Maya deceives the senses of the observer. With perfect timing every movement made by the Knight coincides with more distracting events in the general environment, allowing him to stalk ever closer to his quarry until the right moment comes to reveal the deception.

Phase: Move

Effect: Use this power as soon as the Knight is activated. The Knight makes a CD test. If successful the knight becomes effectively invisible. Whilst under the effect of the Veil of Maya enemy units cannot target the Knight for any reason unless they first pass a CD Check using double the Knight's Meta Level as a negative modifier. (i.e. if a Grand Master is using the power, apply a -6 modifier to the CD Check).

The Veil of Maya lasts until the Knight's next Activation.

If the Knight fails the check this ends the Knight's movement phase.

Alacrity of Suisei

By opening the neural floodgates to the primal energy centres in their bodies, knights of this discipline are capable of an amazing turn of speed. The whole process takes but a moment as the body tenses, waiting for release, then the knight shoots off at an amazing velocity.

Phase: Move

Effect: Before the Knight moves make a CD test. If successful the Knight moves as normal, but adds double his or her Meta Level to their MV Stat.

If the Knight fails the check this ends the Knight's movement phase.

Flight of the Tengu

The Flight of the Tengu is an incredible flying leap that is probably the most impressive spectacle in any knight's repertoire. The knight takes a moment to regulate his breathing, pulse and other physiological systems, and then coils up like a spring, before making a seemingly impossible standing jump. Whilst in flight the knight will flip and somersault at will, striking at any unfortunate enemy that happens to be in their path.

Phase: Move

Effect: At the start of the Knight's move phase, make a CD test. If passed, the knight performs a leaping attack as follows: move the model in a straight line, up to 10". The Knight can avoid obstacles up to 3" in height, and may finish the move on terrain up to 3" high. Make a close assault attack on all enemy models crossed by the line; enemies may fight back as usual. This ends the knight's turn.

If the Knight fails the check this ends the Knight's movement phase.